

Sponsa Regis



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a spiritual review for sisters

SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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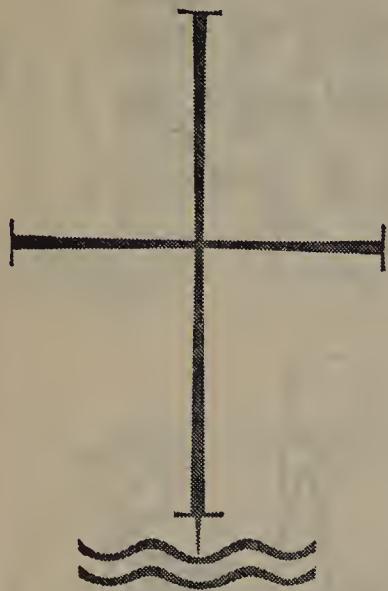
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*...let the little children come
to Me and do not hinder
them, for of such is the
kingdom of God.....*

It is a matter of great joy that the new Holy Week services enabled the laity to participate most intimately in the great redemptive mysteries of our Saviour's sufferings, death and resurrection. But back at the beginning of our century Pius X restored to children their right to enter into a close sacramental union with our Divine Lord in Holy Communion. Rightly, with this privilege went another, almost an obligation, of entering into the meaning of the sacrificial banquet in its totality on a child's level. A grown-up missal for a child is an anomaly, but the answer can now be found in ST. ANDREW JUNIOR DAILY MISSAL, adapted and beautifully illustrated for youngsters in the third grade and above.



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SPONSA OREGIS

May 1956

Vol. 27, No. 9

St. Joseph, The World's Workman

NEW FEASTS SHOW THE TRENDS of the times. The history of the Church's Liturgy for many centuries shows forth the needs and crises of those centuries, how the Church meets each new crisis and challenge by gathering her children first around the altar, and then sending them out on their apostolate of action.

The feast of St. Joseph on May 1 is not entirely new, as it takes the place of the transferred solemnity of the third Wednesday after Easter. Three recent Popes named Pius have striven to give St. Joseph more prominence in the Universal Church (Pius IX, St. Pius X, and our present Pontiff). Their purpose is not only to guide the official and private devotion of the faithful, but also, and especially now, to have St. Joseph accepted as the world's model workman in the Kingdom of Christ.

It is easy to see what crisis and challenge the present Holy Father wants to meet in setting up a great Catholic labor day with St. Joseph as the patron and pattern of workers. In our day, when human labor and the dignity of working people has become secularized, that is, torn from their God-given setting and made an instrument of power politics and dialectic materialism, Christianity must assert its power to uplift and transform the human laborer and his product into their supernatural purpose and value. Not only Communism, but other non-Christian economic systems, degrade the workman and his work in our day. Christianity has to strain every nerve and sinew to win

back the working classes, to bring them back to the altar of the Savior and to a Christian social level of existence.

In the Church's treasury, replete with redemptive truth and the power of Christ, we find the ready means to honor and sanctify labor and to integrate the human person of the laborer into the highest spiritual "system". She has only to institute this new feast in order to make available to all the world the example and the graces it needs to be regenerated. From there on it depends on the Church's faithful members, who must propagate and dispense this wealth lavishly to the working people.

By the unique right of his lifetime association with the Godman in Nazareth, St. Joseph holds the primacy over all the saints as the patron of the workman. His mission in God's plan was not only to veil the mystery of the heavenly origin of Jesus from profanation by contemporaries, not only to save the Child Jesus from Herod and an early death, but to "make a living" for the Son of God on earth, and to work side by side with Him in the workshop of Nazareth. Who can grasp the mystery of the way Jesus worked with His hands, with wood and tools, under the paternal eye of Joseph, and yet remained in the direct vision of the heavenly Father? That unique association, wherein Jesus was at once in the workshop of Joseph and in the "workshop" of the Blessed Trinity, forever entitles Joseph to the honor, praise and recognition of the working world.

For Joseph work and prayer were not two separate compartments. Both activities for him meant union with Jesus, his foster-Son and Son of God. All labor received an *ipso facto* dignity from this union, and he must have dedicated all his mental and physical energies to the God who served him so humbly. If in His public years Jesus stressed that He was "in the midst of" men, doing the work of the heavenly Father among them, then that is true for those many years spent almost alone with Joseph and Mary. Prayer and work coalesced into a higher harmony, where the Presence of Jesus sanctified every stroke of the chisel or hammer and every aspiration of his heart.

We need to popularize these concepts. Sisters must do so, after meditating upon them in their own workshops of convent, church, mission, school and hospital. Once that relation of Jesus

and Joseph is properly unfolded, it can become "the way" for the many.

Sisters generally are devoted to St. Joseph. It is no exaggeration to say that Sisterhoods are keeping alive a great personal devotion to St. Joseph more than any group in the Church. For many a poor convent he is the "man around the house" and, like the Mother of Jesus, they depend on him for taking care of their material needs, buildings, repairs, installations, heating, lighting, purchases, and bills. It is still true today that Joseph serves Jesus and Mary in the Mystical Body by looking out for the Sisters. But Sisters could do even more to popularize his provident care, teaching the world that Joseph will do the same for all who must work for their living, for all who seek first the Kingdom. Just as he is for Sisters a symbol of divine Providence, so they must pass on that wisdom to a world which has forgotten to seek first the Kingdom.

In His earthly Kingdom, the Mystical Body, Jesus has handed over to Joseph His own ring and robe and made Him the great viceroy of His royal subjects. The feast of the Church will teach us that. Just as Joseph of the Old Testament stepped into the saving role of Egypt's viceroy, so St. Joseph is become "the prince of all His possessions". The have-nots of this world, those struggling classes of working people, might well follow the example of the voluntarily poor Sisters and begin to work in faith, genuine divine faith, under the guiding hand and in the workshop of Joseph. There is more to work than earning a living. A Christian performs his work in the workshop of union with God, where it takes on both dignity and glory and eternal merit.

The great Joseph of the New Testament received his directions from heaven. He now holds a heavenly office which very much corresponds with his office on earth, except that now his patronage is vastly extended. Do we ever reflect on the greatness of his title of Patron of the Universal Church, which is the Mystical Body? In a sense nothing has passed away of His essential function, except the outward garb. His spiritual relations with Jesus and Mary continue still; they wax strong in full vitality and overflow from heaven to earth. His present heavenly existence does not diminish his understanding of those who struggle for their earthly existence. Best of all, his power extends

to all the members of Christ's Mystical Body, caught as they are between their heavenly calling and earthward attractions. He holds the key to the sacramental riches of work in these our lean spiritual years. And if no one moved his hand in Egypt without the command of Joseph (Genesis 41:44), then in Christ's Kingdom all hands must pledge allegiance to the new Joseph. His spiritual balance in and with Jesus is our great need in the midst of work. No doubt the "other Marys", who depend on him as the symbol of God's Providence, hold the key to unlock the modern working man from his self-made prison.

—The Editor

Religious Mediocrity

SOME MODERN PEOPLE, Catholics not excluded, raise objection against the religious life on the score that the vows are a danger of mediocrity, both human and spiritual. They motivate their disapproval with reasons borrowed from the science of psychology, whether ordinary or depth-psychology, or simply appeal to common sense. By the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, they say, religious renounce three powerful incentives to generosity, which for the average man and woman are a necessary means for rising above lazy or self-enclosed mediocrity. Not all religious succeed in replacing these natural springs of moral greatness by higher, equally powerful motives; experience rather seems to suggest that only a small number of them do so, with the result that many religious stagnate in mediocrity and fail to yield the fruits they would have yielded had they stayed in the world. That happens not only in the field of human achievement, such as intellectual, social, artistic, economic, but also in the spiritual and apostolic life.

To what extent is this grievance based on facts? Can it be that the alleged mediocrity is one of the reasons of the contemporary crisis of religious vocations? If we cannot admit the objection wholesale — it does look like a rather sweeping generalization — does it not perhaps hold a warning for all religious?

RENOUCMENT ENTAILED IN THE VOWS

It is perfectly true to say that the religious vows entail the renouncement of a good thing, not something evil. In the latter case the vows would not be a matter of counsel but of precept. It is also true that the good thing religious give up is normally for most men and women a spur towards effort and generosity.

The laity, who do not take a vow of poverty, are faced with the struggle for existence, with the necessity of earning a living and making their way in the world. This necessity, undoubtedly, is for many the occasion of showing their mettle and steeling their characters. They cannot afford to remain idle or indifferent with regard to the material goods of this world. They need a certain amount of them for their very subsistence. In our contemporary world wealth comes only to those who exert themselves. Who will doubt that such exertion is of a nature to bring out what is good and great in men?

Still more is this to be said of the natural generosity and self-sacrifice which conjugal love and parenthood arouse in married people. Orderly human love and affection, which keeps to God's commandments, naturally makes one forget and spend oneself for the sake of others. Christian parents who are faithful to their parental duties have to forget themselves for the sake of their children. Their lives are not without sacrifice, and freely accepted sacrifice cannot fail to ennable and sanctify them.

Even the freedom and independent disposition of themselves, which religious surrender in the vow of obedience, is for many people in the world a source of true human greatness and moral perfection. The sense of responsibility for making a success of the career they freely chose awakens in them dormant potentialities and demands effort and self-sacrifice. Especially when the desire of success is inspired with an altruistic ideal of social service, or service of the country or of mankind, this effort for self-realization and complete development of one's personality holds rich promises of human greatness.

To be sure, not every man or woman, who stays in the world and never takes the vows, and who on that score is in a position fully to rise to human greatness, actually does so. No one ever said that mediocrity is found only in the cloister. All too great, idealists lament, is the number of mediocre people who leave

unused their God-given talents. Those who object to the vows as being a cause of mediocrity are not blind to the facts around them. Their contention is precisely that the men and women who enter upon the religious life are generally such generous characters as would have been outstanding had they stayed in the world. By depriving themselves of the human incentives to greatness, they risk to nip their personalities.

It is true, religious by their vows give up what for many is, or can be, the source of genuine human success. But it is safe for them to do so. Warrant of this is the Church's approval of the vows. The religious state is a safe way to Christian perfection. It cannot of its very nature stunt the human personality. Yet the voluntary stripping of human helps to generosity is not without risk.

DANGER OF MEDIOCRITY

That risk is none other than the danger of mediocrity which arises from the absence of those natural motives to perfection. Unless religious replace them with a higher and more powerful motive, they are liable to remain below the level of achievement they could or would have risen to with them. If they fail to do so, they may come to a state of mediocrity, failing to be outstanding as they should, whether in the use of their natural talents or in the spiritual and apostolic life. In the latter field, evidently the more important, mediocrity is not synonymous with lukewarmness. Lukewarmness, spiritual writers are agreed, is marked by carelessness about venial faults. Tepid religious commit venial sins frequently and deliberately. Not so the indifferent religious. Mediocrity, as Father de Guibert once wrote, rather points to a lack of spiritual achievement. Renewed resolves and efforts fail to produce the intended result. True, religious also pay a ransom to human frailty, but the mediocre among them allow such ever recurring slackening as lets go waste the gain of previous efforts. They are, to all practical purposes, stationary in the spiritual life. In what manner can it be said that the vows entail a danger of such spiritual mediocrity?

The vow of poverty is meant to liberate religious from the desire of and attachment to earthly goods. But it also frees them from the worry about their material needs. Their institute will take care of these. Hence they lack the incentive of having to earn their living, to struggle for their subsistence. With that sense of material security a twofold danger of mediocrity may steal into their lives. They may come to consider as their due right, and eventually claim loudly, that all their wants be well provided for. Not unlike children of rich families, they may lack a sense of the value of things, finding it quite

natural that they be given what they ask. They may also come to take things easy or even slip into downright laziness, having a good time without much self-exertion. They then take on a bourgeois spirit like people who are well off and need not worry about material wants. The poverty of these religious may rather look like a farce. Few rich people can afford what they have or claim. And it naturally means meager results in their work, for lack of effort, and still more markedly spiritual mediocrity for want of genuine detachment.

No less a danger of such mediocrity is inherent in perfect chastity. Religious lack the twofold spur to unselfishness which is found in conjugal love and parental devotedness. They are exposed to the narrow self-centeredness of celibates who think mainly of themselves and little of others. The fact of this unconscious selfishness of unmarried persons is well-known. Who will say that all religious keep clear of the danger? Self-love is natural to all men, after original sin. The natural altruism of family affections is a normal brake on it. In their absence, celibate selfishness may grow into a thick shell. Religious who fall victim to this evade, as much as they can, self-sacrifice and self-denial, conditions *sine qua non* for any one to rise above average virtue. Generally they look, then, for compensations in their holocaust, either in petty human affections, sinless perhaps but too natural, or in rather selfish gratification in food or drink.

Obedience also is not without its danger. Has it not been said that it exposes to childishness and undue dependence on superiors? Some religious remain immature and inadult in mentality and behavior. They really never grew up. That must needs reflect on their spirituality. Furthermore, the desire and the habit of doing what they are told may blur the sense of responsibility, as though they need not worry about the consequences of what they do in obedience. At times also religious may consider themselves dispensed from taking initiative, and so they may unwittingly indulge in laziness. In all such cases obedience is misunderstood as a way of making things easy, rather than as the sacrifice of the free disposal of one's time and person, which enables one to throw in his whole power and talent for the cause of Christ. Obedience, then, may be an abdication. It may dwarf the human personality and also jeopardize spiritual success.

REMEDY: A HIGHER MOTIVE POWER

All this shows the urgent need for religious to replace the human incentives for self-exertion, which they renounce, by a higher motive power. This is none other than charity, the love of God and of the neighbor. Charity is the reason that justifies the threefold freedom religious buy with the vows. When charity comes to fill the void left by the renouncement of the vows, then that freedom is no danger of easy-going mediocrity; it becomes a springboard to higher accomplishment.

The freedom from worry about wealth, reward of the vow of poverty, allows religious who are on fire with the charity of God and men to devote themselves unhindered to the only worth-while concern about spiritual riches. They are free for the one thing that matters, God's Kingdom in themselves and in others. They are not diverted from this singleness of purpose by anxiety about the daily bread for themselves and for their dear ones. Full-time workers for the Kingdom, they are able to spend their days and all their strength and talent for the really vital concerns. This supposes, of course, that in their eyes the spiritual values come first — a conviction that should not merely be speculative but so deeply rooted in their wills and hearts that it turns into a driving force for everyday action.

The freedom from particular human affection, result of the vow by which religious sacrifice the happiness of having their own family, leaves their hearts undivided between the love of God and that of men. It is St. Paul who says that the unmarried can give an undivided love to God and Christ, while married people think of pleasing not only God, but also their husbands or wives (1 Cor. 7:32-34). After him, it was only natural that Catholic spirituality came to think of the dedicated virgins as the spouses of Christ, spiritually married to the Word Incarnate, to whom they pledge their entire affection. And as married love does not normally remain sterile, but bears fruit in a happy family, so also the charity of Christ's spouses unfolds in the love of His brethren and sisters. Perfect chastity makes possible a life of spiritual parenthood and devotedness to the needy in spiritual or temporal distress. With the world-wide charity of Christ burning in their hearts, religious are driven to dedicate themselves to men without counting the cost. No danger, then, that their power for loving and spending themselves will suffocate in the closed-in air of celibate selfishness.

The freedom from independent choice in the disposition of their time and talent, reward of the vow of obedience, means for religious unhampered readiness for the work of the Kingdom. It first removes the danger of self-willed action, which for lack of genuine humility too often mars the good Christ wishes to do through men. Once the preoccupation about personal interests is set aside, religious can give themselves fully to their God-given

tasks. Obedience means for them a power for action. They are strong with the strength of Him who sends them — a strength no human resistance can break. Obedience thus doubles their efficiency, and at times multiplies it in a measure men hardly understand. It hallows their whole initiative. They bring to their task all their resources of body, mind, heart. The Lord's interest and purpose is theirs; they have no aim of their own. Driven on by the love that inspired their dedication, they literally work wonders. Who has not been struck with wonder at the spiritual or apostolic achievements of some religious? Childlike in their obedience, they were far from childish in thought and deed. What obedience wrought in them, it should also effect in every religious. It should exalt their natural and spiritual abilities.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

But that is precisely the question: does the average religious succeed in living by this higher motive of charity? Or is it true that only few actually do so, while the greater number live in human and spiritual mediocrity? In theory the vows ennoble religious, but in practice . . . ?

There are some religious, no doubt, who fail to replace natural incentives by the higher motive of the love of God and men. They tried and found it difficult; they failed and gave up trying. They grew unfaithful to their duties, because of apparent lack of success or for fear of ever renewed effort. Perhaps only in small matters. Such lukewarm religious, when they do not become unfaithful to their vocation, remain even below the level of spiritual mediocrity. At times they endeavour to compensate spiritual failure by making the most of their natural abilities. But human success cannot make up for their spiritual infidelity.

But such is not the case with the great number of religious. Many of them succeed in effectively animating their whole lives with the charity of God and men to a remarkable degree. Others try and fail, but start again, and so make progress in charity. Fervent religious succeed in a large measure, to various extents. Do all rise above mediocrity, both spiritual and human? If some fail, are they unsuccessful *because* of their vows and the renouncement the vows involve? To get at a truthful picture of the situation, we must consider separately human and spiritual mediocrity.

It may happen that religious, even among the most fervent, do not produce the human results which their natural gifts seemed to promise. This is a fact which we may at first acknowledge without much hesitation. But it should be viewed in the proper perspective. In the religious life natural and human achievement is not the chief purpose. Natural accomplishments, such as learning, teaching, writing, administration, or any professional attainments which religious may have in common with seculars, are for them secondary; they are subordinate to a higher objective; they are not what religious really are after. And it does happen, perhaps not only by way of exception, that religious are asked to give up certain natural successes for which their personal abilities qualified them with little uncertainty. It may also happen that, because precisely these human perfections come second place, some religious more or less mistakenly neglect or fail to attain such human results as they could attain without any detriment to their spiritual purpose. For these reasons it may be said that religious at times remain below the level of human achievement that was open to them.

Yet, it must also be said that many religious are no less outstanding in their professional duties than are seculars, and they are so without harm to their spiritual and apostolic endeavor —rather the opposite. Just as their spiritual aim is helped by their human success, so also the latter derives inspiration and strength from the former. Perhaps we should even say that, other things being equal, religious do not in their professional duties lag behind their secular colleagues; the contrary would more easily be true. Is not, for example, religious education or nursing equal to any other? Is it not often preferred by many seculars? Thus the natural or human achievement of religious, for all its essential subordination to their spiritual goal, is remarkable enough on its own merits. Even in this regard, therefore, and making allowance for purposeful sacrifice or eventual neglect, we should not say that religious on an average are condemned to human mediocrity.

Do many of them stagnate in spiritual mediocrity? Some do, apparently. Without exactly growing tepid, or giving up altogether their struggle for religious perfection, they lack thoroughness in their spiritual effort; they fail to grasp fully the meaning

in actual practice of an all-embracing and all-pervading love of God and of the neighbor. They meet with repeated failure in their resolves, because of a more or less conscious and guilty half-heartedness; they also repeatedly start over again and so evade the pitfalls of actual tepidity. The reason of their spiritual mediocrity is not the renouncement inherent in their vows, but rather a lack of plenitude in that renouncement, a sort of double-mindedness, by which they endeavor to combine a lingering attachment to what they gave up with their spiritual ideal of total dedication to God. Are there many such religious? Who can judge except He who reads our hearts? But it is certain that spiritual achievement often escapes our notice, and this is all for the better. What looks like failure may well be actual success.

As a rule, however, religious know with sufficient certainty whether they are fervent or not. And of fervent religious, who take their dedication seriously and unconditionally, who do not allow themselves any deliberate rapine in their holocaust, it may confidently be said that they rise above spiritual mediocrity. A number of them do so in an excellent manner. They are the spiritual persons who approach perfection, in the measure that it can be reached in this life, who as it were carry with them the presence of God and impress on all who come near them a sense of the spiritual or supernatural realities. Who has not known such religious? Others grow above mediocrity in a real though less spectacular manner. Such are they who in the struggle for constant fidelity to daily duty, through ups and downs, relentlessly push on towards their goal, making of eventual failings the occasion of a better start. Perhaps they look less strikingly spiritual, but their effort towards perfection is nonetheless successful, their advancement steady and real. Today when we conceive holiness as consisting in constant fidelity to everyday duty, a fidelity that is often nothing less than heroic, we should more easily see that fervent religious, who struggle and never omit starting again after failure with renewed zeal, are actually above an average of spiritual success. Their success is achieved, not despite the renouncement of their vows, but thanks to their fidelity to that holocaust.

WARNING LESSON

The modern grievance against the religious life and religious vows is, therefore, not unanswerable. On close examination it appears unfounded. Yet it contains an important warning for every religious. We ought to be spiritual and supernatural, take our dedication to God and self-renunciation fully and unconditionally; else we lend a pretext for slander of the religious life. Not unless we are thoroughly spiritual, not half-heartedly, can we evade the danger of mediocrity.

And this spirituality, as we know, cannot be put on: people sense whether it is genuine or not.

Mediocre religious do add fuel to the crisis of religious vocations. How could young people, brimming over with idealistic aspirations, feel attracted to the religious life by the uninspiring samples of mediocre religious? Shall we blame them for not choosing what, on the face of it, looks like a career for half-failures? It is the genuine, hundred per cent religious, who silently preach the greatness of their dedication to God and men, that appeal to the young.

Perhaps we should add that this total consecration to the spiritual ideal is never so fully accomplished that we may consider ourselves safely and securely established in it. The work of spiritualization is never completed in this world; it is the task of a lifetime. This necessarily unfinished state of religious perfection, in its early stages at any rate, may be mistaken by outsiders for some sort of mediocrity. For religious it is a reminder that they can never give up the effort for advancement. Then only do they live according to the demands of the religious state, of the state of those who strive after Christian perfection.

P. DE LETTER, S.J.
Kurseong, India

Mystery Of Love (ii)

A REMARKABLE DIFFERENCE of attitude to mystery is to be found in the two great traditions that have contributed to the formation of culture in the West. The Greek philosophic current tended to identify mystery almost exclusively with its incomprehensible and hidden character; and modern Rationalism tried to equate the mysterious with the absurd. It is just the opposite tendency that is emphasized in sacred literature, where mystery stands for something that has been revealed. Stranger still, perhaps, is the confident emphasis of the Bible upon faith as a source of understanding. When the Lord asked Solomon what he most desired, the young king asked for a listening heart that would enable him to discern between good and evil; and it is declared by the prophet Osee, that the people perish for want of knowledge and understanding (Osee 4:6).

Those who are without faith are regarded as obtuse in the ways of God, and without understanding, so that they cannot really benefit from the mind's dialogue with the things around

them. It is another instance of the paradox that "to him that hath shall be given." One is reminded of a question put to the Master on one occasion. "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" When the Master distinguished between His disciples, to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, and those outside the chosen circle, to whom these mysteries are communicated only in parables, we can almost detect a certain complacency on the part of the Apostles. There are those who have eyes to see and see not, who have ears to hear and hear not, and it is to be inferred that the Apostles were not in this humiliating situation.

The attitude to mystery has changed, however, in recent years. A distinction is now being made between mysteries and problems. It is clear that this is being done to the benefit of mysteries, though to the detriment of problems. Whatever we may think of the interpretation that is given to this distinction, the distinction itself is not without significance. There is a natural mystery in things, an inexhaustible content of meaning, and the recognition of this fact is all to the good. But it is also true that man, in his capacity for thought, must interrogate the mysterious. Endowed with an intellect which is more rational than intuitive, problems are inevitable. But there are problems and problems; and love presents a problem the heart of which is mystery.

Man awakens to the mystery of love in many ways. He finds himself in a universe of which, in his body, he forms part. By virtue of his spiritual endowment, in faculties like intellect and will, he emancipates himself sufficiently from the world to appreciate his own situation in it. The very fact that he can interrogate reality and that he is aware of the world around him, denotes his superiority over it. This world in which he lives is itself a presence, a presence that has been given to him, as each one can verify for himself. But here is the important point in man's gradual awakening: he soon discovers that this presence is by no means a thing of indifference to him. Too many ties bind him to the world around him to allow him to ignore this: it is into this world that he was born; it is in this world that he must look for the sustenance of his life; and it is in this world that he encounters other selves whose mysterious subjectivity is similar to his own.

These are important things in the life of the human mind; and one could go on adding to them. But once a man has begun to distinguish between things as *objects* and persons as *subjects*, he is very near to the Kingdom of love. He will know instinctively that persons are not to be treated as things or objects, and he will find in persons something that is sacred. The miracle of love itself may happen to him and then he will realize what it means when the presence of another has become a joy instead of a burden. It is not impossible, such is the magic of love, that a man may experience a strange humility for which the value of another is of paramount importance. It is related of the Little Flower that on one occasion she addressed our Lady in these words: "If thou wert the Little Flower and I, Therese, the Queen of Heaven, I should still want to be Therese in order to admire thee, the Queen of Heaven." Of such profound and exalted attitudes is the mystery of love capable, when it is true to its own secret essence; and the Little Flower, who could truly say "But I love everything," knew something of this.

It is the common belief that, of all the manifestations of the human spirit, love is the very noblest. It is true that, from a certain point of view, knowledge upon which love depends enjoys a certain superiority. But in this life, as St. Thomas himself would admit, it is better to love God than to know Him. It is possible, in fact, to love Him more than we know Him. Love is associated in men's minds with perfection of personality, either because it denotes the tireless effort at the purity of its inner aspiration, or because it commands a communication of its riches to others at a certain stage of its development. One has only to think of the men and women of history who gave their all for the love of God. A St. Francis of Assisi, for instance, still captivates the minds of men and, though he is sometimes honoured for the wrong reasons, the truth is that men instinctively recognize in him a human nature that was brought by love to the pitch of perfection. But St. Francis was only an image, as he himself would joyfully admit, and he sends the minds of men to Him of whom he was the image. Nobody ever loved on this earth as did the Son of God made Man. And because He loved as He did, and died for very love, death died with Him, and love was born anew in the heart of a redeemed humanity.

It is on heights like these that one can freely speak of love. Love needs the atmosphere of heaven. But love dwells not on the heights alone. Love is a presence to be found throughout the length and breadth of the universe. One of the most profound and consoling truths in the entire theology of St. Thomas is that man, by nature, loves God more than himself, and above all things. Nor is the value of this statement radically impaired by the admission, on the part of the same Saint, that fallen man is not equal to the love that is hidden in his nature. The instinct of nature remains, as a witness to a goodness that was wounded but not destroyed, and St. Catherine of Siena reminds us of this in a very striking sentence: "The soul cannot live without love, but always wants to love something, because she is made of love, and by love I created her" (*Dialogue*, p. 47). And where love is, there also is a Presence.

FATHER JAMES, O.F.M. Cap.
Cork, Ireland

Approaching the Psalms

LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET that I am an ordinary kitchen Sister. If I venture to write about the Psalms, it is rather out of the abundance of a loving heart than from a desire to teach or preach. I think *Sponsa Regis* is the place where we, as a great religious family, can speak to each other about great and holy things and interests without presumption.

In our Community we have many different talents and jobs, all of which are essential to a full life. All the individual members are supposed to agree on the same truths and means of spiritual perfection, as St. Luke writes in the Acts about the first Christians, who were of one heart and soul. Yet the first believers were not all saints. St. Paul's Letters show clearly that the young Church was very human; still the Mystical Body of Christ was a living reality and the Christian communities practised worship and charity together with great devotedness.

Later on, in the history of the Church, there grew a strong tendency to a more individual spirituality, for instance, among

the hermits, until St. Benedict's legislation about common liturgical life and St. Augustine's theology of the Mystical Body dominated Christian living. A new spirit of piety was born many centuries later, and we have St. Bernard's and St. Francis' deep affective and imaginative spirituality, which continues into our own times. Today we are witnessing a revival of liturgical piety and of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. The core of liturgical prayer is the psalmody. Jesus Himself used the divinely inspired Psalms. He continues to use them, when He prays in us in His Mystical Body.

Why do Christians neglect those great prayers in favor of other, more subjective prayers? Because their own feelings and thoughts are more important to them than God's own thoughts. Affections of happiness and grief and confidence are all very good, but they are not primary in prayer, if prayer is seeking God and His Presence and His sentiments. Good prayer is Godward movement pure and simple, seeking His will, not enjoying oneself, not an egocentric search for sensible consolations, even less an indulging of one's sentimentality. The Psalms are pure and simple prayers, which never offer cheap consolations or posed sentiments. True, not all worshippers understand the Psalms used as parts of the Mass. In the *Liturgy of the Church* Dr. Pius Parsch shows how the Psalms of the Introit, Offertory and Communion have dwindled down to a verse or two, because the processions were lost in the less solemn and private Masses. The Psalms sung during those processions not only accompany an action, but deepen our intention, unfold the understanding of the sacred action, develop the actual offering of ourselves — all in the inspired words of Holy Writ.

Here a serious problem arises. How much must we understand of our prayers, especially as we use these inspired prayers? Would it not be more humble merely to lend our voices and good intention? Are we to stop our mental activity, as we progress to more intimate union with God? The beginnings of God's mysteries are small, and we know so little about the great mystery of union with God when we begin to pray. To us it seems as if we are making the start; yet we could not possibly begin without His grace. This "team-work" of grace and human effort is a great honor bestowed on man. He wants our coopera-

tion. How can we refuse? He wants our best efforts, fully human and yet humble. Let us be humble in recognizing and using God's gifts to us. St. John Chrysostom says it in such a homely way: spices give stronger fragrance, the more they are rubbed between the fingers. So with Holy Scripture and the Psalms. The more we revolve the sacred Words in meditation and prayerful study, the more they reveal of their hidden treasure, and the more can we seize upon the fruit of their immense riches.

For my first love of the Psalms I am indebted to my Protestant childhood. God wants the salvation of all mankind. When Protestants lost the Sacraments, God left them His Word of Holy Writ, which has been a valuable source of inspiration, love and worship among good Protestants. In church, at school, in the home we sang hymns, real masterpieces of religious poetry. Following me to and from school daily for four years, my mother used to shorten the two miles with stories, mostly from the Bible, and we discussed them eagerly. For the last fifty years Protestants have had a clear, readable translation, and many Protestant scholars and missionaries have gathered reliable facts about oriental customs and ideas to help us over literal difficulties (though there remained many problems which even now as a Catholic I try to solve). But I seriously believe that this childhood friendship with the great men and women of Holy Scripture is the best foundation for a sound spiritual comprehension later on. As grown-ups we lose so much of the child's objective intuition and exact memory, and we only read certain "edifying" parts of the Old Testament, "spiritualize" a little about them, and get a superficial spirituality.

Lately, on reading Maria Augusta Trapp's *Yesterday, Today and Forever*, the question struck me: does there exist a Sisterhood where all the members deepen their religious life through group study and discussion of the Bible? I do not know. If this is a touchy problem, it is yet an important one. Must we drop a problem because there is disagreement on it? A false democracy would enter religious Sisterhoods if they had to solve all differences by dropping them. Surely it is right and beautiful to pray, work and recreate together in harmony, but we would run the danger of becoming a narrow-minded, self-sufficient group of spinsters, if all intellectual interests and differences of views were banned. Progress comes about from honest study,

even from contrary opinions and errors. It is a sign of maturity to meet mentalities other than one's own with patient open-mindedness; childish pettiness can pout at the truth as well as at untruth. The Pope is calling for adaptations: does he mean only the religious garb?

It is true, many Sisters teach and lecture on Bible, the Liturgy, the Church Fathers and Theology, but do they also kindle the light in their own communities? Is the individual Sister "formed" spiritually on the great sources of faith; is she given a sound foundation of basic truth with which to develop a rich, true, happy, harmonious life and fruitful apostolate? Among the laity, in all walks of life, one sees groups for Bible study and liturgical worship spring up like mushrooms. Must those subjects be taboo in the convents? Is a young Sister disloyal to her Community and Foundress because she was taught, before entering, that the Liturgy is the true and indispensable source of Christian spirituality (following St. Pius X)?

Often the clergy do not understand our problems. They have had their seminary training, which supplied any lack of parental education. If Sisters only had the courage to say to their priest: "I don't know Latin. I never read the Bible. I can't understand the meaning of the Psalms I pray daily. I honestly never read one line of philosophy. I have a very poor notion of Church History. Help me." I am sure priests would understand we need their help more than for weekly confession.

An approach to the Psalms would include studying them as poetry. Poetry is not a worldly luxury. The Holy Spirit has preferred to inspire great and choice parts of the eternal truths as poetry. Poetry clothes the transcendent truth of Almighty God in human garb. Poetry gives us a spiritual lift which helps us fix our attitudes toward the supernatural world for which we are bound. It is true, poetry loses by translation, but if it is great poetry, it retains much of its beauty. Reading poetry demands humility. Great poetry does not mean enchanting rhythm, rare words and metaphors; on the contrary it is very simple. It uses certain symbols which the reader must discover and understand (images, words, ideas, devices), or else he will not understand the message.

The love for poetry is killed through bad teaching. A pupil may learn that Shakespeare and Dante are great, but never discover it for themselves. Many people are told the Psalms are great poetry, with beauty and wisdom, but they never learn it through personal experience and love. We learn so many things *about* the Bible and the Psalms that we have no time left for reading them. Read the Psalms one after the other. Read them aloud. If you do not understand the one or other, then skip it and continue with the next. Reading the whole Psalm will reveal the deeper meaning of an Introit, Offertory or Communion verse. And then you can meditate better on the sacred action of the Mass. The Psalms lend themselves to repeated readings, and only then yield their rich variety of meaning and devotion. Reading, study and meditation help us to unite with one another in Community, to pray with one voice, with one intention and heart. In each soul there will register different impressions of the Holy Spirit — one is a novice, another an old saint, a third is not — but all grow in harmony of truth because they are attuned to what they pray.

Psalm 8 is short, giving a shepherd's wonder about the world as he saw it during a starlit oriental night. As we pray, we learn to understand the dignity of man, who is master of God's creation.

Psalm 22. About peace in God. The picture of a shepherd may be strange to us, but easy to imagine. This Psalm is worth knowing by heart. Its simple text will reveal more and more to the attentive mind.

Some 62 of the Psalms are easy to understand. Some others may appear tedious and even formless and repetitious, for example, the long Psalm 118, which praises faithful observance of the Law. Its art-form, as Msgr. Knox shows in his lucid translation, is that of the ancient alphabet-poem. In our day we have little reverence for holy letters or numbers, but it is a genuine feeling among primitive people. What may be more distracting to the modern mind is its continual praise of the Law. At the time when God chose His People from among nations, they were culturally exactly like their neighbors, and something extraordinary had to be done to educate them and keep them apart in a manner worthy of their vocation. Here the inseparable "teamwork" of God's grace and human effort shines forth. The Law was God's gift to the Hebrews, making them superior over pagan tribes and teaching them slowly but surely the way of

perfection. We Christians need that Psalm very much. While we have the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity, we must also obey the Law. There is no short-cut to heaven. When Christians cause scandal and the social order becomes more and more alienated from confessional principles, it is undoubtedly because, in the many details of daily life, we neglect or violate the great common, natural law. It is important for us religious of today to see this, and a careful reading of the Law Psalms may open our minds and hearts to that wider social responsibility.

The Old Testament shows how divine Providence prepared for the coming of the Messias. The Psalms crystallize this theology and piety, and we see how the inspired writer prays in prophetic vision about the future Kingdom (Psalms 21 and 110). We shall not understand the Psalms right, if we do not keep in mind when and why they were written, and that their authors were not living under the New Testament revelation. All this means learning the literal sense. If we see the personal problems of David (persecution of Saul, his son's treason, sins and contrition), we find them so much easier to assimilate into our daily difficulties. And then they tell us about Christ, the great eternal King. In every instance the Psalms accompany each created soul from childhood till death, through hardship and happiness; even Psalm 87 we pray in and with Christ Jesus. Not all the Psalms will appeal to us in the same way, but that should not disturb us too much.

The vengeance Psalms are perhaps the greatest enigma for religious, since in the Sermon on the Mount the Savior tells us to love our enemies. Here we must be careful to distinguish between personal enemies and God's enemies. The Psalms castigate God's enemies. We can compare their sentiment with that of Christ driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. God's enemies are still alive and active after two thousand years of Christianity. Evil crops up even in the field of God's sowing, which is the Church, and we are those sinners. Recent wars have given us a terrifying proof of the corruption in "Christian society". It was Christians who perpetrated or tolerated evil, who denied their Christ, who tormented and killed other Christians. These horrors are not less than what Psalm 108 describes. This Psalm is not a threat against communists, who do not read Holy Scripture, but against Christians who do and who betray Christ. Let us recognize what devastation has befallen us, and that the future may bring complete annihilation. God did not send Jonas this time, but the very Queen of Heaven and earth (at Lourdes, Fatima, Beauraing and Salette) brought the message that Christians are guilty of evil, and that only prayer, penance and love can reconcile us with God.

Reading the Psalms makes one feel like Moses before the burning bush. They are holy, mysterious, awesome, instilling confidence. The Psalms are not magic, in bringing the soul to inspired union with God, but they impregnate the mind with God's own diffused Wisdom, and so facilitate the mystical "team-work" of grace and love.

To one who has been praying human compositions for years, and who now begins the divinely inspired Psalms, it will be a great change. At first he may feel lost and unhappy, like a player who changes his technique of play and is handicapped and clumsy until he masters the perfect method. Our goal is so much higher: the closest union with Jesus in His Mystical Body, praying with and in Him, sacrificing through and with and in Him, that all may become one with each other and with the heavenly Father.

Sr. A.

A Modern Hermit -- Sequel

Soon after publishing the three interesting articles in Sponsa Regis, under the title "A Modern Hermit", the editor received a communication from the Bahama Islands describing the author's unexpected physical condition, which calls for our prayers. A confrere writes about him: "I suggested to him that since Sponsa Regis had recently published his life in three installments, from his own pen, his readers, thousands of Sisters in various parts of the world, would be keenly interested in receiving an account of his present condition. Such an account, I observed, would also encourage them to pray for him during his last days, when he so feels the need for prayer to sustain him during periods of utter frustration, insomnia, etc. He thought the idea a good one and so asked me to type his letter in the form of the enclosed article and forward it to you."

FRA JEROME will be eighty on September 7 next. He will be very thankful for the Sisters' prayers. He is a very sick man,

suffering from all the infirmities of old age. He is giddy and can scarcely walk at all. His memory fails him and he has lost his voice. He feels dizzy and confused. He can hardly talk and has lost the use of his senses and tastes—a good safeguard against gluttony! For onions taste just like carrots; cheese like soap or sawdust. He can hear a little with one ear and cannot read much, often not at all, even with glasses.

He can only offer the infirmities of old age in union with Our Lord's watching in Gethsemani. His holy will be done in all things!

He had a bad fall at the Hermitage, Cat Island, at the well. He could not kneel or sit up. It took him four and a half hours to crawl forty feet to his bed. He was bruised and bleeding at every place in his body. So he had to come into Nassau (New Providence Island). He could not say Mass. Now he is in the Monastery Infirmary. Three or four times he has tried to return, but always gets too weak and dizzy.

The Most Reverend Bishop, Paul Leonard Hagarty, O.S.B., Prefect Apostolic of the Bahamas, has been most good and considerate in every possible way. God bless him and his work. And also the Very Reverend Prior at St. Augustine's Monastery, Fox Hill, where Fra Jerome is staying.

The hermit is called to go through the dark night, to suffer for those who have had no chances as he has had in life. The hermit has been called. He has looked back and seen that he ploughed a crooked furrow. He is not fit for the Kingdom of God. Yet the Hound of Heaven, the Good Shepherd, has sought him out. He must bear now some Purgatory,—must watch one hour in Gethsemani: *Fiat Voluntas Tua!* That in all things God may be glorified.

Yours,
Fra Jerome, T.O.S.F.

SUMMER SCHOOL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC, at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. June 18 to July 21. This school for priests, Sisters, and laymen provides introductory and advanced courses in chant, modern church music for organ and choir, applied music in voice and organ, en-

semble singing through rehearsals, lectures on the Mass, and daily participation in the sacred liturgy. College credit is offered for all courses. For further information see ad in this issue, and write to Rev. Gunther Rolfson, O.S.B., St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, New York, offers the sixth annual institute on religious and priestly vocations on July 25 and 26, 1956, to priests, religious and laity. A special week-long workshop for mistresses of novices is planned. Address all communications to Rev. John F. Gilson, S.J., Fordham University, New York 58, N.Y.

MADONNA HOUSE 1956 Summer School of Catholic Action extends its invitation to men and women, including Sisters, for various terms from July 2 to 28. For prospectus write to Miss Trudi Cortens, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario, Canada.

The Convent Book Shelf

NEW TESTAMENT AIDS

It is very heartening to see the growing interest in Gospel studies, especially among our teaching Sisters where it is so valuable, both to them personally and to the great number of our children whom they influence. For this reason we are particularly glad to offer them any help in this field. We now have two works on hand which we heartily recommend. These works are (1) the Knox-Cox *Gospel Story*. (2) *A Popular Explanation of the Four Gospels* by Rev. Bruce Vawter, C.M. 2 Volumes, paper \$2.25 per volume (special prices for more than one copy). Order from: Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana.

(1) The Knox-Cox *Gospel Story* is a New Zealand production which first appeared in 1950 in two volumes, now bound into one. Rev. Fr. Cox, S.T.L., S.S.L. has produced a very handsome book. He presents the whole Gospel story in chronological order, using throughout the Knox version. The narrative stands to the left. To the right, in very readable italics, there is a running commentary. It is just the book for those who have not much spare time or like to relax in their Gospel reading. It is ideal for spiritual reading, very handy for all teachers, and most suitable for use in high schools.

Before each chapter there is a lucid one-page chapter giving the setting and the gist. The frontispiece map and the numerous plates illustrating the sites and geography of Palestine add to the elegance of the volume. A five-page harmony at the end is a great aid for ready reference. We have written to Rev. Fr. Cox and hope to do something about getting supplies to America. Fr. Cox's address is C.Y.M. Publications, Box 2029 Auckland, New Zealand.

(2) Rev. Father Vawter's work is the work of a scholar who knows and loves the word of God and wishes to share his knowledge with others. One is struck from the first with his enthusiasm and ardent desire to give the reader all he has. This work belongs to the series "*Father Smith Instructs Jackson*". He omits nothing which the average student wants to know about the holy Gospels. He is most thorough and satisfying. For this reason his book is most valuable for all who teach religion and Gospel study in any way. It has a special interest for those who have to instruct converts, as he caters specially for them.

REV. J. D.

WITNESSES TO THE WORLD. A Popular Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. By Daniel W. Martin, C.M., S.T.L., S.S.L. "Father Smith Instructs Jackson" Series. Paper cover, 159 pages, 75 cents a copy (special rates on 5 or more). "Father Martin's style and language matches Father Vawter's, so its appeal should be of equal proportion." Order from: Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana.

IMAGE BOOKS. Order from: Doubleday Image Books, 575 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N.Y. The following *Image Books* appeared at Hanover House (a division of Doubleday & Co.):

ON THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH (SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES). Book II: Creation. By St. Thomas Aquinas. Newly translated, with an introduction and notes, by James F. Anderson. (Image D27, 95 cents; in Canada \$1.10); (also published in hardcover edition for \$2.50.) Book II is the second of a new five-volume translation of the entire *Summa*...

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, "THE DUMB OX". By G. K. Chesterton. With an appreciation by Anton C. Pegis. Complete and unabridged. (Image D36, 75 cents; original edition \$3.00).

THE SIGN OF JONAS. By Thomas Merton. Complete and unabridged. (Image D31, 95 cents; in Canada \$1.10; original edition \$3.50).

THE WORLD'S FIRST LOVE. By Fulton J. Sheen. Complete and unabridged. (Image D30, 75 cents; in Canada 90 cents; original edition \$3.50).

EDMUND CAMPION, (Jesuit and Martyr). By Evelyn Waugh. Complete and unabridged. (Image D34, 65 cents; original edition \$3.50).

LIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN (The Story of LaSalette). By John S. Kennedy. Complete and unabridged. (Image D33, 65 cents; in Canada 75 cents; original edition \$3.00).

PARENTS, CHILDREN AND THE FACTS OF LIFE. A Manual on Sex Education for Parents and Teachers. By Henry V. Sattler, C.S.S.R., Ph.D. Complete and unabridged. (Image D32, 65 cents; in Canada 75 cents; original edition \$3.00).

HUMBLE POWERS. Three novelettes by Paul Horgan. (Image D35, 65 cents; in Canada 75 cents).

THE LITTLE SECRET. Key to the Interior Life. By Rev. Cassian Karg, O.F.M.Cap. Translated from the German by a Capuchin Father of St. Joseph's Province. Pamphlet, plastic cover, 45 pages, 10 cents. Order from: The Third Order Bureau, 1916 North Fourth Street, Milwaukee 17, Wisconsin.

IN THE SCHOOL OF JESUS. Volume I: Introduction to the Interior Life. By Rev. Cassian Karg, O.F.M. Cap. 67 pages, 20 cents each. Volume II: The Development of the Interior Life. By Rev. Cassian Karg, O.F.M. Cap. 63 pages, 20 cents each. Volume III: An Unknown Wonderworld of the Little Secret. 67 pages, 20 cents. Volumes IV and V: The Friendship of Jesus Through the Little Secret. Adapted by Fr. Basil Gummermann, O.F.M.Cap. 105 pages, 25 cents. Order from: Third Order Bureau, 1916 North Fourth Street, Milwaukee 17, Wisconsin.

All of this revolves around "the little secret", a simple little program which has for its object a closer, more conscious union with God. What the author and the translators have in mind is simply to introduce all kinds of people, young and old, learned and unlearned, to the intimate love of their Savior by the easiest and most obvious kind of interior prayer. That this has been successful is shown by the many examples interspersed among these pages, examples of little children and adults and even priests, who inspired their lives with the tiny spark of the

little secret. The later volumes (all pamphlets, very inexpensive) show how easily the little flame grows into great enduring personal love for Christ. No one can read these booklets without learning how to "breathe" spiritually, how to restore the normal functions of his soul life into contact with God, and how to progress in the "School of Jesus". There is also the proper integration of the "School of Mary", and a wealth of practical, tried wisdom, all of which helps to make these booklets good spiritual reading. Many spiritual directors and teachers will want to put them into the hands of zealous souls — after warming their own hands and hearts at the fire.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST. By Mark L. Kent, M.M., and Sister Mary Just of Maryknoll. Bruce, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1955. 285 pp. \$3.75.

This unique book is a chronologically arranged panorama of the lives and works of two hundred missionaries from the time of the Apostles to the present. Many of the sketches depict the character of recognized saints; others show the contributions of great men and women of the mission fields not yet canonized.

Preceding each chronological division of world history is a brief historical setting of the centuries. This

introduction helps toward an understanding of the problems and specific activities of the missionaries included in each period. Each sketch is followed by an appropriate thought derived from the biography.

The organization of the book is good. There is evidence of intelligent planning and comprehensive study. It is to the authors' credit to have produced so representative an account of missionary activity from the first century to the present without losing sight of the unifying objective, the **Glory of Christ.** S.M.H.

MAGNIFICAT 1855-1955. By The Felician Sisters. Wm. Keller Inc., Buffalo, N. Y. Order from: Felician Sisters, 600 Doat St., Buffalo 11, N.Y. 1955.

Magnificat is the centennial record of the Congregation of the Felician Sisters founded in Warsaw, Poland, in 1855, by Mother Mary Angela Truszkowski. Among its contents are found a brief but comprehensive historical sketch of the Congregation, an exposition of its ideals, and personality profiles of the foundresses of the many houses in Europe and the Americas. The extensive bibliography found at the end of the book as well as the chronological data of the missions of the Congregation increase the value of the book. The photography is good. It adds an appealing and human element to the record. Its illustrations and symbolism are interesting.

Young women interested in religious communities will find this exposition helpful. Likewise, anyone making a study of the Church's apostolate among the immigrants will find the book a good source of factual materials. S.M.H.

FATHER TO THE IMMIGRANTS. By Scilio Felici. Tr. by Carol Della Chiesa. P. J. Kenedy, New York, N. Y. Order from: St. Charles Seminary of the Pious Society of St. Charles, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island 4, N. Y. 1955. 248 pp. \$3.00.

In this biography the author depicts the life and work of Bishop Giovanni Scalabrini, founder of the Society of the Missionaries of St. Charles and father of the Italian emigrants. Scilio Felici based his portrait of Bishop Scalabrini on Monsignor Francesco Gregori's well documented *Life and Works of a Great Bishop*. The account is seemingly accurate without being encumbered by documentary annotations. The critical reader however would appreciate less subjectivity in the author's analyses of the character and work of the Bishop.

Bishop Scalabrini was born in Lombardy in 1839. He entered the priesthood and at the early age of thirty-six he was consecrated Bishop of Piacenza. In this position he played the role of one of the most courageous and fascinating figures of the Italian Risorgimento. His constant struggles against the subversive political movements that were the result of the confiscation of Church property by the State, as well as his inflexible stand against Freemasonry, show him as an imposing figure in State and Church affairs. His charity to the poor, his humility, and his filial devotion and subordination to the Pope are characteristic of his true greatness of soul.

Perhaps the Bishop's greatest contribution to his people and to the Americas was his absorbing interest in the Italian emigrant. The biography shows him as a father to the emigrant spiritually, morally, and materially, as one who more than any other figure stands "as the symbol of the concern and solicitude of the Church in the mother country for her children throughout the world." Bishop Scalabrini founded the Scalabrinian Society, whose initial objective was the care of the Italian immigrants in the Americas. Today their work has spread to many fields of activity. S.M.H.

DAYS OF JOY. By William Stephenson S.J. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1955. 176 pages, \$2.50.

Prayerful reading and meditation are the tools through which the

Church's liturgy becomes meaningful. Easter and its recently changed liturgy are a timeless source of meditation for every Christian.

The sub-title of this little book, "Thoughts for all Times", phrases well the author's thesis. Easter joy is a well-spring at which the Christian soul may come at any time of the year to drink. The Christian life is essentially one of joy. The fact must not be lost among the crosses of every day. For in Christ Risen is our hope. We like Christ must die to live.

Each event in the life of Christ following that glorious Resurrection day takes on a new meaning, as we relive the Mysteries. And that new-found knowledge means a fuller Christian life. In the Cross we find our true happiness; in the Cross we see even greater hope of rising with Christ to eternal life.

Giving is basic to the life of a follower of Christ. But from what source do we draw to be able to share? Again our answer is the liturgy. Earnestly seek and in prayer you shall find a treasure of truth.

S.M.A.

BEGINNING AT HOME. By Mary Perkins. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Beginning At Home is not just another book about child guidance. It is a book for parents who, having to contend with the whole tone of the secular society in which they and their children are living, are determined to gain a right perspective concerning the Christian education of their children. In a delightful style Mary Perkins suggests to parents the "sacramental plan" of educating their children. This master plan has its implications in every day living and challenges the easy lines of attack parents too frequently used in guiding their offspring. Those elements of our ordinary lives that have been made to seem most secular by the spirit of the time are discussed in chapters entitled: Our Neighbors,

Things, Places, Work, Training for Life's Work and Play, Vocation, and Sex Education. In another chapter, *Redeeming the Time*, the author establishes the basic essentials of a Christian day in family living and shows how to make the "terrible round" of daily duties more purposeful and more interesting. The book then is a challenge to parents to be worthy of their high vocation by leading their children through a well ordered Christian home life to achieve a sense of God, a sense of direction, a sense of responsibility and a sense of mission.

S.M.D.

SOEUR ANGELE AND THE GHOSTS OF CHAMBARD. By Henri Catalan. Sheed and Ward, 840 Broadway, New York 3, N.Y. 1956. \$2.50.

This is a satire on the sex-ridden and on those for whom sex is nothing sacred but a casual thing. Of all characters in the book the humble, the simple, and the pure are the ones with a balanced outlook. They stand in contradiction to the advocates of the idea that only those who give undisciplined reign to their urges are integrated personalities.

But, a detective nun is an unrealistic nun. And the author apes Chesterton.

S.M.L.

A SHEPHERD WITHOUT SHEEP. By E. Boyd Barrett. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1956. 143 pages, cloth \$2.75.

Reminiscences and reflections make up the greater part of this book. The author comments at length on his condition as a shepherd without sheep, a priest deprived of the right of priestly ministrations, of the privilege of offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. Throughout runs a deep cur-

rent of nostalgia. True, after wandering in the mist for about twenty years, the doors of the paternal home were again opened to the author; he has found peace and happiness; he does not complain of his lot; indeed, he is deeply grateful, but no longer to stand at the altar as a priest of God — this he feels very keenly.

The author talks of other shepherds without sheep, as well as of wandering priests still outside the fold. For all of them he not only himself exhibits an exquisite charity, but also calls upon his readers to assist them in every way by prayer and deed.

Despite the rambling character of the book, it retains an absorbing interest to the very end. Thanks are due to the author for supplying a better understanding of the laicized shepherds without sheep. G.J.R.

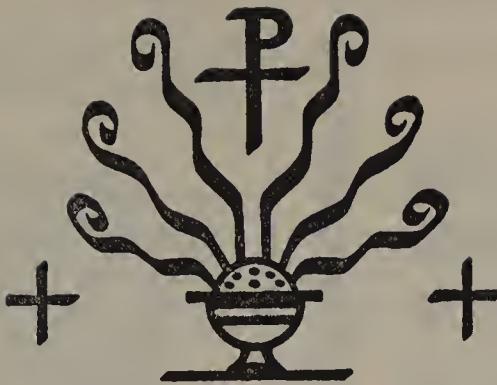
TYBURN HILL OF GLORY. By the Nuns of Tyburn Convent. Burns Oates, London. 167 pages, cloth \$2.00 (including postage), paper \$1.60 (including postage). Order from Sister Mary Andrea, Tyburn Convent, 9 Hyde Park Place, London W.2, England.

This book was written for the golden jubilee of the founding of the Benedictine Congregation of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The story relates the early beginnings at Montmartre in 1897, the expulsion from France in 1901, and the strange sequence of events which led the young community to its new home at Tyburn, the Montmartre of England, in 1903. The volume brings the history of Tyburn Convent up to that date.

All who remember the Foundress, Mother Mary of St. Peter (Adele Garnier), who died in 1924, will be pleased to find the life of this saintly nun summarized and her photograph included. The world needs such women as Mother Mary of St. Peter in its present chaotic state, and also the women who followed her, adorers, souls dedicated to reparation and prayer so that others may be saved.

Abbot Columba Marmion's connection with the Convent receives a whole chapter. Some of his letters to the Mother Foundress are published in **Union with God**.

Of special interest to Catholics today, when Tyburn is by way of becoming a national shrine, is the part dealing with the foundation of the Convent, which includes a history of Tyburn from the earliest days and of the origins of the Shrine. It describes the revival of devotion to the Martyrs under Cardinal Vaughan, Dom Bede Camm and Father Philip Fletcher. This book should be a stimulus of devotion to the increasing number of pilgrims from all over the world, who venerate the English Martyrs. The Sisters have set up ways and means to helping the new Tyburn, such as, becoming a "founder" in honor of the 105 Martyrs of Tyburn, or supporting a Sister of Prayer, or "becoming a branch of Tyburn Tree", etc. — ways and means which should appeal to generous souls. Perhaps a generous reader can pass on this information to some friend or relative who is able to help. We should all be happy to be branches, twigs, leaves or buds on the Tree of Tyburn. S.C.



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who are gone before us
with the sign \oplus of faith
and sleep in the sleep
of peace. [Canon of Mass]



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